



THE VOTER

March 2022, Vol. 49 No. 3

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Oconee and Pickens Counties

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 to educate women as they prepared to vote for the first time. LWVOP continues in its mission of educating league members this month with a program on Health Care for the Underserved in Our Community. Four presenters, **Sandra Land, Ellie Taylor, Eunice Lehmacher,** and



Linda Gahan

Eleanor Hare have tirelessly researched this topic and will give us the facts on health care services for the uninsured and the underinsured. We will learn how these services are made known to those who need them. The pandemic has highlighted the lack of adequate health care for all Americans, particularly those below the poverty line or caught in the Medicaid gap of having an income too large to qualify for Medicaid but not enough income to afford insurance. Despite LWVSC lobbying efforts, our state legislators have not elected to expand Medicaid funding to all that need it, claiming that it is too expensive. Zoom on March 15 at 7 pm. to hear this timely topic discussed.

Health Care has been a recurrent topic as we heard from the LWVSC Health Care Working Group in a pre-LEAD program. We will have the opportunity to learn more on health care from the Charleston League in 2 webinars on March 9 and 23 at 7 pm. Register for these programs on their website, <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/charleston-area>.

The nominating committee is looking for new leadership for the coming year. If you want to make a difference in Making Democracy Work in Pickens and Oconee Counties, please contact **Patty Warner** at Warnerpat47@me.com or (864) 986-9398. We are only effective with hard working and dedicated leaders.

Submitted by Linda Gahan

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Oconee and Pickens Counties
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29631
my.lwv.org/south-carolina/clemson-area

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 1 Pickens County Election Commission – 4:30 pm
- March 9 Webinar on Health Policy by Charleston LWV, 7 – 8 pm. Register for this event on the Charleston LWV website.
- March 12 Foothills Sierra Club Announcement: Oconee Nuclear Station Concerns, OLLI Building, 1:30 pm. Limited seating. Contact **Ellie Taylor** at [**elptyl@bellsouth.net**](mailto:elptyl@bellsouth.net).
- March 15 LWVOP program: *Dollar and Sense: Health Care for the Underserved in Our Community*-virtual at 7 p.m. (Zoom link on League website)
- March 22 LWVOP Board Meeting – virtual at 5 pm (Zoom link on League website)
- March 23 Webinar on Health Policy by Charleston LWV, 7 – 8 pm. Register for this event on the Charleston LWV website.
- April 19 LWVOP program: Penny Cothran will speak about her work with Sierra Club. *“Is SC Ready for a True Energy Democracy”* - virtual at 7 pm. (Zoom link on League website)

PREVIEW OF MARCH MEETING: DOLLARS AND SENSE

Join LWV of Oconee and Pickens Counties via Zoom on March 15, 2022, 7:00 – 8:15PM for presentations and discussion of League action on access to health care. The Zoom link can be found on the LWVOP web page and will be sent to members prior to the meeting.

“Dollars and Sense: Health Care for the Underserved in Our Community” is the subject of the monthly meeting program for our local League. Members of the Health Care Team of LWVOP will provide an overview of the availability of health care experienced by residents in our two-county area. The focus will be on information about current sources of health care for those who are uninsured and underinsured along with discussion about how residents in need can learn about these services. Attendees will also be updated on the efforts of LWV at local, state, and national levels to advocate for improving the availability of health care for all.

Submitted by Sandra Land

RECAP OF FEBRUARY MEETING

The LWVOP DEI working group was pleased to host **Kim Carter** as its February 15, 2022, program speaker. Kim is the associate director of LGBTQ+ programming at Clemson's Gantt Multicultural Center. Kim provided insight on LGBTQ+ common experiences, the use of pronouns, and legislation that has been introduced that will harm the LGBTQ+ community. They also shared ideas to increase LGBTQ+ membership in the League. Kim shared media recommendations and the program slides used in the presentation. Below is a partial list of reading resources. If you are interested in receiving more or reviewing the Power Point please contact **Carolyn Bishop-McLeod** at cbishopmcleod@ftc-i.net.

Kim Carter's annotated list of LGBTQ+ media recommendations:

And the Band Played On... by Randy Shilts

This book was published in 1987 and chronicles Randy Shilts' understanding of the AIDS epidemic as it was unfolding around him. I would recommend reading it in conjunction with the next book on the list, as David France's text looks at some of the same events with a different perspective, as well as adding another context that Randy Shilts did not have.

How to Survive a Plague by David France

This book is also a historical view of the AIDS epidemic, with special focus on the activists in groups like ACT UP. It has also been turned into a documentary.

Why Marriage? by George Chauncey

George Chauncey is a historian and does a great job in this book giving one side of the question, "why marriage?" as in, why did marriage equality become the main focal point for the gay rights movement in the early 2000s.

Gay New York by George Chauncey

This one is a little more technical, but I found it very fascinating. It focuses on the time before and between the World Wars.

Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers by Lillian Faderman

This book focuses mainly on the history of lesbians throughout the twentieth century.

The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle by Lillian Faderman

This book is a comprehensive chronicling of the gay liberation/gay rights movement; a Memoir/Anthology

Fun Home by Alison Bechdel

This is a graphic novel that has been turned into a Broadway musical.

Something that May Shock and Discredit You by Daniel Lavery

This memoir is a little esoteric, so don't go into it thinking it will be very linear. May not be to everyone's taste, but I enjoyed it.

Submitted by Carolyn Bishop-McLeod

SC PLUTONIUM PIT PLAN DISTRACTS FROM OUR MOST PRESSING THREAT

The federal government has unveiled plans to construct a plutonium pit manufacturing plant at the Savannah River Site near Aiken, a decision the League of Women Voters of South Carolina opposes.

A plutonium pit is the bowling ball-size radioactive core used to trigger the detonation of a nuclear warhead. The proposed Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility would have the capability of producing an additional 50 plutonium pits per year by 2030, and it would bring environmental concerns such as the generation of mixed (radioactive and nonradioactive) hazardous waste. The S.C. Environmental Law Project, which has sued the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration, says these agencies have failed to undertake a new or supplemental programmatic environmental impact statement as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

An impact statement would evaluate the direct, long-range and cumulative environmental impacts of producing pits across multiple DOE sites, including SRS and a site at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. It's impossible for the Energy Department to make an informed decision about its plans or assess alternatives that would reduce or eliminate the significant risks to human and environmental health posed by the project until an impact statement is conducted. The plan by the two agencies to expand the U.S. plutonium pit manufacturing capacity and increase annual production of plutonium pits from 10 to 80 in eight years sends a troubling message. Such a rapid increase suggests a corresponding increase in the production of nuclear warheads.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina supports arms control measures that reduce the risk of war, increase global security and ensure that our existing nuclear arsenal is supported and maintained in line with U.S. national security. Expanding nuclear warhead production capabilities and targeting a 700% increase in plutonium pit production could reignite a nuclear arms race between the United States and its potential adversaries. Then there is the cost. The league is concerned that the actual cost to construct the processing facility would be significantly greater than the current estimate. According to the Energy Department's fiscal year 2022 budget request, the initial projection to repurpose the failed SRS Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility to produce 50 plutonium pits was \$4.59 billion. The most recent projection more than doubled, to \$11.1 billion, with contingency costs still to be determined. Tellingly, a caveat in the budget states that achieving the production goal of 50 plutonium pits per year in 2030 is unlikely.

Lastly, we would argue that the threat of nuclear war, while existential, is not the single or most pressing threat to humanity, or our security. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction and treaties to reduce nuclear arms have reduced the threat of nuclear warfare and achieved relative stability for more than six decades. So other factors should get more attention as we work to protect our national security, not least the existential threat of climate change. U.S. security agencies, including the Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security, have warned that climate change is a threat multiplier for conflicts over food and water and that dislocation and migration will be exacerbated as the world warms. In September, a World Bank report projected that climate change could force more than 200 million people to move in the next three decades due to water scarcity, reduced crop productivity and rising sea levels.

Continued on next page

PLUTONIUM PITS CONTINUED

The current rate of human greenhouse gas emissions and global warming is unsustainable, and the window to limit global warming to 1.5 to 2.0 degrees Celsius by 2050, the cap needed to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, is closing rapidly. Arguably, without urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the increasingly dire consequences of global warming will pose a greater threat to our national security than nuclear war.

In turn, the risk of a renewed nuclear arms race would heighten geopolitical tensions during a time when unprecedented international cooperation will be required to mitigate the certain and catastrophic consequences of future climate change.

For this reason, Energy Department resources committed to construction of the processing facility would be better spent on research and investment into renewable energy, sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions and other efforts to reduce human greenhouse gas emissions. Ultimately, combating climate change with haste should be our highest national security priority.

Charleston Post & Courier: Commentary: By Victor T. Volskay Jr. Jan 13, 2022

Victor T. Volskay Jr. lives in Simpsonville and is co-chairman of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina's Environmental Working Group.

FOOTHILLS SIERRA CLUB ANNOUNCEMENT: OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION CONCERNS

Duke Energy has asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for approval to keep the Oconee Nuclear Station operating until 2053. Since the Fukushima disastrous 3-nuclear reactor meltdown, what has Duke Energy done to ensure continued public safety at their nuclear facility in Oconee County that might be operating continuously for 80 years? The integrity of the Jocassee Dam is of special concern.

Representatives from Beyond Nuclear, Nuclear Watch South, and the Sierra Club will provide evidence, much of that coming from a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (RNC) whistleblower, that Duke Energy has both failed to ensure the safety of the Oconee Nuclear Site because of the possibility of Jocassee Dam failure, and their unwillingness to properly protect the three nuclear reactors in an unlikely (yet possible) Jocassee Dam breach.

The meeting will be held in-person (limited seating) with masks and social distance required on Saturday, March 12 at 1:30 p.m. at the OLLI Building in Patrick Square. It will also be available via Zoom. For the Zoom link, please let **Ellie Taylor** know that you wish the link sent via email: elptyl@bellsouth.net.

ACTION ALERT: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Urgent Action Needed on Bills Currently in the SC Legislature on Reproductive Health and Rights

This is a red alert moment for sexual and reproductive rights in South Carolina. Act now. Ask family members, neighbors, and friends to act.

Tell **Senator Thomas Alexander** to **vote no** on S907 and S988, two bills currently on the Agenda of the Medical Affairs Committee of the SC Senate which impact access to abortion. Senator Alexander, who serves Oconee and a portion of most of Pickens Counties, is a Member of the Medical Affairs Committee and President of the Senate. Call Senator Alexander in Columbia at 803-212-6220. Talk to a person rather than leave a message. Identify yourself as a constituent. Thank him for his service.

This article includes information about S907 and S988, H3225 Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act, an update on SC Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act, passed by the SC Legislature in 2021, and links to Women's Rights and Empowerment Network (WREN) and Planned Parenthood, organizations leading the Action.

S907 Abortion would force providers to disclose medically inaccurate information when they provide medication abortion. Medication abortion is extremely safe; half of all abortions in SC today are performed through medication.

S988 Equal Protection for Unborn Babies Act makes abortion, including medication abortion, a crime with charges including feticide, manslaughter, homicide, and more. It would make IUDs and other common contraceptives illegal because they could prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus. Couples experiencing infertility couldn't undergo IVF. It is likely that some women experiencing miscarriage or stillbirth could undergo police questioning and possible criminal charges/imprisonment.

The impact of an unplanned pregnancy falls primarily on the woman. The Medical Affairs Committee needs to listen carefully to the voices of women and consider that these bills will not eliminate abortion in South Carolina. Women who can afford it will travel to another state while those who can't travel will resort to unsafe methods and providers. Women will die. Tell Senator Alexander to vote no on these bills, and others like them, so that women in South Carolina can continue to enjoy the reproductive health and rights we deserve.

Also tell Senator Alexander to encourage Medical Affairs to address the **Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act (H.3225)**. It was passed by the House in 2021 but has not yet been considered by the Medical Affairs Committee. The bill addresses maternal mortality in South Carolina including the higher rate for African American mothers.

Update on the SC Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act, passed by the SC Legislature in 2021. On February 22, 2022 a federal appeals court upheld a lower court ruling blocking the abortion law. **FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ACTIONS TO TAKE:** Women's Rights and Empowerment Network (WREN): www.scwren.org; Planned Parenthood: www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/planned-parenthood-votes-south-atlantic

Submitted by Sandra Land

LWVUS HIGHLIGHTS FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION

The following recommendations to the LWVUS are the result of our Program Planning Meeting on January 22, 2022.

We support continuing the **Campaign for Making Democracy** work. We actively participated in the priorities of **Voting Rights** and **Improving Elections** by establishing a group to attend election commission meetings, develop relationships with election commission staff and board members, and offer volunteer service for each of our 2 counties. We presented several program events on Redistricting. one member is a major participant in the state redistricting efforts. We have used many of the League Programs as the basis for our program events for action at the state and local level. The full listing is in the report as submitted to LWVUS that will be available on our web page.

We **support** the proposed concurrence for adding language from the LWVNY positions on healthcare and financing healthcare.

We **support** that LWVUS increase lobbying for legislation for comprehensive immigration reform and expanded paths to citizenship. We think that LWV needs to pay more attention to international issues.

We **do not support** the proposal to eliminate structural age bias in the LWVUS bylaws (age 16 for membership). We consider that age 16 is close enough to the legal voting age of 18 to be an appropriate age for membership in the League.

We suggest that the League consider adding the language “environmental justice” to the program on environmental issues. Although it can be argued that the League supports environmental justice, the subject is of sufficient importance to warrant explicit discussion in the League’s Program.

The final question of the report form: *In June 2019, LWVUS authorized a pilot concurrence on electoral systems. The purpose of the pilot was to give Leagues additional time to review and consider this position during their program planning. Was the additional time for review helpful in reviewing and considering the proposed concurrence position on Electoral Systems?* We lost track of this pilot concurrence and did not consider this position. We need to consider how we might address the matter of electoral systems in the future.

Participate in a Forum for Westminster Special Election

Deadlines are approaching for a special election to be held on April 26th in Westminster. It promises to be a high-profile race following the resignation of three City Council members. Candidates must file between February 18th and 28th. As soon as we get candidate names, we will begin contacting them for available dates. The forum could be as early as March 28. Sandy Law is currently evaluating sites for a forum. Please join us in this first of the year endeavor. If you have questions that should be asked of the candidates, please send them to **Alice Flower** (aliceflower2019@gmail.com). Contact **Sarah McNeill** (sdmcneill@live.com) or **Sandy Land** (sandyl@pa.net) to get involved.

CARE ABOUT SAFE AND FAIR ELECTIONS? GET INVOLVED!

The SAFE (Safe and Fair Elections) Team will meet March 10, 10:30 AM via ZOOM. To receive the Zoom link, please contact Janet (jmarsh@clermson.edu) or Carolyn (cbishopmcleod@ftc-i-net). An important report will the work of our two County Election Offices and Commissions.

We will also discuss what we can do given pending legislation effecting voting and elections, as well as the Constitutional Convention Resolution. It will be voted on in the Senate in the near future, its last stop before SC becomes the 18th of 34 states needed to make the Convention a reality – unless the Nays out-number the Yays. Stay updated on the legislation and resolutions the League cares about at the Making Democracy Work Network Update, 2022 Making Democracy Work Network Updates|MyLO (lww.org). Contact your Senator NOW!!

On a very positive note, also reported at the above website on 2.23.22, the House Judiciary Committee passed an amended version of H.4919. It provides two weeks of no-excuse early voting along with other positive changes. Accepting the League’s input, along with that of a few other organizations, several Representatives offered amendments improving the legislation. (One of the organizations was SCARE (organization of SC county election officials.) **Lynn Teague** reports this bill is still very early in the process. H.3444, which would make changes to the state’s election commission and county election commissions, may soon be considered in a Senate subcommittee. For more information, see the Network Update, 2.8.22 Thank you to Lynn Teague, VP for Issues and Action, LWVSC, our “lobbyist,” for her continuing excellent work at the SC Legislature and for keeping us so well informed.

Submitted by Janet Marsh & Carolyn Bishop-McLeod

<i>Clemson City Council</i>	<i>1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm</i>	<i>Pickens County School Board</i>	<i>4th Monday, 7:00 pm</i>
<i>Seneca City Council</i>	<i>2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm</i>	<i>Oconee County School Board</i>	<i>3rd Monday, 6:00 pm</i>
<i>Pickens County Council</i>	<i>1st Monday, 6:30 pm</i>		
<i>Oconee County Council</i>	<i>1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm</i>		

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone (opt) _____

I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters Ed Fund" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

Visit our website at www.lwvclemsonarea.org and contact us at lwvclemson@gmail.com.